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Higher education teachers' attitudes towards English medium instruction: A three-country comparison

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Abstract

We report on a small scale study carried out in Austria, Italy and Poland which investigated the attitudes of university teachers engaged in teaching their academic subject through the medium of English. The data consisted of 25 teacher interviews. We focused on the topics of internationalisation of universities, on policy and resourcing, and on the levels of English proficiency (theirs and those of their students) needed for effective English medium instruction (EMI). We also observed whether there were differences among the respondents from the three countries and attempted to relate any differences to the linguistic, educational and political context of each. Our findings suggest that whilst very similar concerns are in the minds of the teachers regardless of the country they were teaching in, some interesting variability in attitudes, relating to language and to history, could be detected. To our knowledge, this is the first study on EMI that compares teacher attitudes in three countries, hence its exploratory nature. Our findings would suggest that further research of such comparative kind might provide insights into how the phenomenon of EMI is being introduced and accepted across the world.

Keywords: English medium instruction; university; teacher attitudes

1. Introduction

This paper reports on a small scale exploratory comparison of lecturers and tutors in three universities situated in Poland, Austria and Italy and describes their attitudes towards the growing phenomenon of English medium instruction (EMI) in higher education in their respective countries. The EMI phenomenon has been described as displaying a momentum unlikely to be reversed for the foreseeable future (Dearden, 2015) but one where the benefits are neither established by solid research evidence nor clearly understood by educational stakeholders.

For this paper we adopt the following definition of EMI: “the use of the English language to teach academic subjects (other than English itself) in countries or jurisdictions where the first language (L1) of the majority of the population is not English” (Dearden, 2015). We should note the contrast here with the definition of content and language integrated learning (CLIL) given by Coyle, Hood, and Marsh (2010): CLIL is “a dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language” (p. 1). The issue of terminology (e.g., EMI, CLIL) and what it represents is a complex one. EMI is arguably an umbrella term for academic subjects taught through English, one making no direct reference to the aim of improving students’ English. It is a term used across the world and usually in higher education (HE). CLIL is a term which originated in and is almost entirely specific to Europe, although some research in non-European contexts has used it. CLIL has behind it a teaching method which has been described in some detail (see Ball, Kelly, & Clegg, 2015; Dalton-Puffer & Smit’s 2007 edited book for a series of classroom studies), whereas EMI makes no claim to a method nor is it, to our knowledge, described anywhere as a method. We should note that CLIL, unlike EMI, does not specify English as the language being used. Nonetheless, despite the plurilingualism being advocated by, *inter alia*, the Bologna Declaration (European Ministers of Education, 1999) English has for some time been by far the L2 most adopted in CLIL contexts (Coleman, 2006). The extent to which EMI might adopt the concept of integrating language learning into content learning is an important theoretical perspective to adopt. We use the broad term *teachers* to describe lecturers and tutors who teach academic subjects in the HE sector. Before considering previous literature on teacher beliefs and attitudes we present a broad picture of some of the issues that have arisen to date in relation to EMI.

1.1. The growth of EMI and its challenges

There is now conclusive evidence (Dafouz & Guerrini, 2009; Doiz, Lasagabaster, & Sierra 2013b; Graddol, 2006; Wächter & Maiworm, 2014) that across the

world we are experiencing a rapid increase in EMI. The expansion of EMI is taking place primarily in HE, but secondary and even primary education are also undergoing a rapid change in this direction (Murphy, 2014). An online survey of post-graduate courses in Europe (Brenn-White & Faethe, 2013) estimated that those taught through EMI have increased by at least 42% to a figure around 6,407 with the trend showing an increase from a similar survey only a year earlier (Brenn-White & van Rest, 2012). O'Dowd's (2015) survey of 70 European universities found that only 7% stated that they were offering no courses at all through EMI.

Globally, a recent 55 country survey (Dearden, 2015) found that in both the HE and secondary phases of education the trend was for an increase in EMI courses, with the private education sector leading the way and the public sector being forced to "play catch up" (Macaro, 2015). Examples of where this private versus public battle is taking place are in Japan (Chapple, 2015) and in Bangladesh, where Hamid, Jahan, and Islam (2013) provide evidence of private sector student identities perpetuating a social divide.

In Dearden's (2015) global survey it was additionally concluded that (a) although public opinion is not wholeheartedly in support of EMI, especially in the secondary phase, the attitudes can be described as "equivocal" or as "the object of some concern" rather than being "against" its introduction and continued use; and (b) where there are concerns, these relate to the potentially socially divisive nature of EMI because instruction through English may limit access from lower socio-economic groups and/or a fear that the first language or national identity will be undermined. It appears that in Europe and across the world more generally similar questions are being asked and challenges are being faced by those involved in the implementation of EMI, although each country will have its own perspectives on those questions and challenges. Among those involved in the switch from L1 medium of instruction to EMI, some of the key stakeholders are the teachers themselves and their attitudes towards EMI are the focus of this study.

The rapid growth is being increasingly attributed to a desire for universities to "internationalise," a definition yet to be consensual (but see Knight, 2013 for an interpretation), and one which appears to be linked to attracting students from outside the country where the institution is situated in order to increase revenue (O'Dowd, 2015), attracting foreign faculty in order to present a competitive profile of "expert teachers" (Gürüz, 2008), catering for an increasing expat community (Belhiah & Elhami, 2015) and a desire to rise in the international university rankings (Lehikoinen, 2004; Rauhvargers, 2013). However, a causal link between the introduction of EMI and successful "internationalisation" has not yet been established, and in Denmark Hultgren's (2014) study suggests that there is no clear correlation between the introduction of EMI and higher-ranked universities.

A number of commentators have expressed serious concern about “Englishisation” (Hultgren, 2014, p. 390) of HE with Phillipson (2009), following on from his seminal notion of linguistic imperialism (1992), describing it as a potential pandemic and Kirkpatrick (2011) arguing that we may be hurtling disastrously towards “a global society based on Anglo-Saxon values” (p. 11). In France similar concerns have been expressed by faculty and the media alike (Macaro, 2015; and see Section 1.3 below).

One of the major concerns of EMI is the effect that it might have on the home language (L1), and that concern is not limited to countries with a post-colonial history. However, the evidence for this concern is not conclusive as yet. Ramanathan (2014), arguing in the sociolinguistic context (Gujarat, India) of English as a post-colonial language, proposes that if not carefully managed the vernacular language *can* be devalued by the economic forces shaping a divided education system, prolonging colonizing policies that “still hold sway” (p. 308), but that it does not have to be that way. This is a view also held broadly by Lehtikoinen (2004) in the Finnish context: No firm evidence exists as yet of a deleterious effect on the L1 but, he argues, we should be vigilant. Hultgren (2012), investigating “domain loss” (borrowing English words for scientific terminology) found that, at the University of Copenhagen, although computer science was “borrowing” heavily, physics and chemistry, surprisingly, were not. Yet policy-makers and governments express concern about the threat to the country’s home language as reported with regard to the United Arab Emirates by Belhiah and Elhami (2015). Clearly much more research is needed to monitor the effects on the L1 of the rapid expansion of EMI where, in the case of the domain loss, it may lead to a situation where no academic textbooks are published in the home language with the linguistic and social consequences that this might entail.

A question which the literature to date does not seem to have answered sufficiently is what level of English is expected of students on EMI courses, both at entry and at exit. Doiz, Lasagabaster, and Sierra (2013a) found that, in the Basque/Spanish context, a high percentage of the local students (42%) claimed to have a very low level of English proficiency, whereas the number of international students reporting a low level of English was around 12%, suggesting some measure of selection (either self- or imposed) in the latter. Interestingly, in a different publication, Doiz et al. (2013b) also report that administrative staff in the university had serious concerns about students’ English proficiency.

In terms of the teachers’ English proficiency there is contradictory evidence. Lam and Wächter (2014, p. 22) report that in their study the overwhelming majority of EMI programme directors considered the proficiency of the EMI teachers as good or very good. Dearden (2015), on the other hand, reported some concern expressed by the informed participants, perhaps reflecting that the former study was Europe-based, whereas the latter attempted a more global picture.

Not unexpectedly, one of the main questions being asked by commentators on the EMI HE phenomenon is whether the teaching of academic subjects through English actually improves the students' English? Here, the evidence is not conclusive. Lei and Hu's (2014) study of undergraduate students in China studying in EMI programmes found no evidence of a benefit on English proficiency when compared to students on Chinese medium programmes. Rogier (2012), on the other hand, investigated IELTS score gains after four years of EMI study at universities in the United Arab Emirates and found these gains to be statistically significant. However, given that there does not appear to have been a comparison group of some kind, these findings merely tell us that in four years of exposure to English students improved their language proficiency, not that learning through EMI is better than, say, a programme of L1 content instruction plus English as a foreign language (EFL) support.

The corollary of the "does EMI improve English?" question is whether the academic subject suffers as a result of it being taught through a second language. Joe and Lee's (2013) study of medical students in Korea, using a 10-minute understanding of content test, found that EMI had little or no detrimental effect on students' comprehension of the lecture. Yet, in surprising contradiction, the students wanted L1 summaries as support materials in EMI lectures (suggesting they were experiencing difficulties) and more than half reported that the EMI course was less satisfying than learning through L1. Dafouz, Camacho, and Urquia's (2014) study of first year students (finance, accounting and history) at Madrid's Complutense University found no difference in academic subject outcomes between EMI students and students taught through Spanish. We have found very little other research, in the HE context, of deficit/benefit to an academic subject. A recent review of CLIL in Spain (Dooly & Masats, 2015) does not report on any studies (either in the secondary or tertiary context) which focused specifically on the impact on academic subjects of teaching content through a second language. We can therefore conclude in summary that previous literature on EMI has identified a number of issues central to its development. These are:

1. Whether the introduction of EMI is sufficiently bringing about the desired internationalisation of HE to make it worth the challenges it entails.
2. A possible negative impact that EMI may have on the home language.
3. The extent to which English proficiency is improved via EMI (compared with through L1 medium of instruction plus EFL programmes).
4. Whether academic subjects are being learnt at least as well as through the home language.
5. The extent to which the learning of English is being integrated in EMI HE classes.

We hypothesised that these issues might be of concern to various education stakeholders (teachers, students, managers, policy makers). It is to university teachers as key stakeholders in the EMI process that we now turn.

1.2. Faculty perceptions of EMI

The research literature on teachers' perceptions of EMI has recently become quite abundant. However, there is little comparison among countries, or geographical areas, which would provide insights into commonalities and differences leading to the development of theory. Pre-service science teachers in Malaysia (Othaman & Saat, 2009) expressed major concerns about their students' poor levels of English and envisaged having to change their pedagogy as a result because "explaining concepts in English" (p. 311) was considered to be their greatest challenge. Using an online survey, Belhiah and Elhami (2015) asked 100 teachers across a range of institutions in the United Arab Emirates to estimate the impact they felt EMI was having on students' English proficiency, with results suggesting favourable outcomes (67% thought that EMI improved students' English proficiency). Similar positive views were also expressed in a Korean study (Byun et al., 2011), but concerns were articulated regarding whether students had the necessary English proficiency levels to cope at the beginning of the course, and whether sufficient support systems were available for EMI teachers. Kiliçkaya (2000) investigated the attitudes of Turkish university teachers and found equivocal attitudes expressed: On the one hand they believed Turkish as the medium of instruction would have a more positive impact on their students' learning than EMI because of (inter alia) the resulting low student participation; on the other hand, teaching through English overcame the limited academic resources available in Turkish.

At the European level, in Werther, Denver, Jensen, and Mees 's (2014) small scale study of lecturers in a Danish (business) university, EMI was seen more as an inevitable consequence of wishing to attract international students than a clearly planned language policy, and some respondents indicated that "teaching through English is more of a problem than most people dare to openly admit" (p. 453). Some felt that they had been "saddled with EMI in a relatively haphazard way" (p. 452) and asked to take on EMI courses at very short notice often without any acknowledgement of the additional workload that managing content through an L2 entails. A small scale qualitative study of teachers in Spain (Cots, 2013, p. 116) reported teachers being forced to adopt EMI by institutional and professional considerations rather than through personal choice with references to "survival" and "no other option." Lecturer respondents in Doiz et al. (2013a), whilst acknowledging the importance of introducing EMI as the global

language of academia, also commented on the additional workload that this represented. In Airey's (2011) study of Swedish university teachers, the respondents felt that their lectures were less precise and less in-depth than if they had been in L1. The linguistic challenges of EMI have been responded to in a number of different ways according to jurisdictions. University teachers in the Ukraine (Tarnopolsky & Goodman, 2014) reported that both themselves and their students were having to codeswitch to L1 for a number of pedagogic functions (especially for checking understanding of content), with some teachers feeling this was an unfortunate consequence of low student proficiency. Others pointed to the artificiality of attempting English-only instruction with homogeneous L1 EMI classes of students. The Austrian teachers in Tatzl's (2011) study, however, showed much less concern with the linguistic challenges they faced implementing EMI, perhaps because (apparently) as many as half the teachers in the sample were native speakers of English.

Teachers' English proficiency levels may affect attitudes to EMI. For example Jensen and Thøgersen (2011) found that younger teachers in a Danish university were more favourable to the spread of EMI than older teachers, and they attribute this attitude to feeling more comfortable using English-only or English extensively. This then leads to the question of whether staff should be selected to teach through EMI based on proficiency tests and whether this selection might disadvantage certain academic groups (Klaassen & Räsänen, 2006).

1.3. EMI in Italy, Austria and Poland: A brief overview

Before moving on to our current study we provide a brief overview of HE in the three countries using data gleaned from a variety of sources. We should point out that the choice of these three countries was entirely dictated by our opportunity to conduct the research in those countries (see Section 2) and the financial resources available. Nevertheless, having a Southern European country (Italy), a Central European German-speaking country (Austria) and a country which has for historical reasons only recently adopted English as its first foreign language (Poland), provided us with three differing and potentially interesting European contexts.

A survey conducted by the European Commission (2012) of self-reported competence in an L2 placed Italy second from last among 27 EU nations. Only 38% of Italians claimed to be able to speak at least one foreign language¹ well enough to be able to have a conversation, compared to the EU average of 54%. In 2010 (published 2013), Costa and Coleman carried out a comprehensive survey

¹ Throughout this survey English was classified as being by far the most widely spoken foreign or second language among non-Anglophones in Europe.

of EMI in HE in Italy. They demonstrated that Italy has been “slow to internationalise” (p. 5) despite an Italian law of 2010 calling for greater mobility of faculty and students, more co-operation among universities, and an increase in programmes taught through a second language. According to online data from *Universitaly* reported in Guarda and Helm (2016), there are 55 universities offering 245 “English Taught Programmes” (ETPs, another term for EMI), 226 of which are at Master’s level and 19 at Bachelor’s level. This represents a 72% rise in just one year. Nevertheless, Helm and Guarda (2015) consider English as “far from being the language of higher education in Italy.” Wächter and Maiworm (2014) estimate moreover that only 0.5% of Italian students are enrolled in ETPs and rank Italy 21st in the EU in terms of ETP provision.

In Italy the introduction of EMI has provoked a heated debate in recent years. Lack of internationalisation has contributed to what Costa and Coleman (2013) argue is a situation where no Italian university figures in the top 200 of the World University Rankings. Because of this low ranking, at the Politecnico di Milano, the rector tried to introduce, relatively quickly, EMI in all courses but met with fierce resistance from students and faculty alike. The media (e.g., *Corriere Della Sera* in 2014) presented the debate by, on the one hand, enlisting the views of nationally famous linguists who predicted a linguistic, cultural and even cognitive decline resulting from introducing EMI, and, on the other hand, giving ample space to the then minister for HE who had been seen to be repeatedly lending his full support to this introduction. In terms of preparation for EMI in HE, CLIL is permitted in the last year of Italian secondary education through legislation passed in 2010 (Grandinetti, Langelotti, & Ting, 2013). However, teacher training for either CLIL secondary or EMI tertiary education is virtually non-existent, and, with regard to teacher professional development, Francomacaro (2011) reports that EMI lecturers in her study apparently were not aware that language plays an important role in content delivery.

In contrast to Italy, the European Commission (2012) placed Austria 11th among EU nations in self-reported second language proficiency, with 78% of Austrians claiming to speak at least one foreign language well enough to have a conversation. Austria in fact showed the most marked improvement since the previous survey among European nations in 2005. Austria has 23 public and 11 private universities (Studying in Austria, 2016). Only one university (University of Vienna) is ranked (170th) in the World University Rankings 2014-15 Top 200. Wächter and Maiworm (2014) estimate that 1.8% Austrian students are enrolled in ETPs and rank Austria 10th in terms of ETP provision. Unterberger’s (2012) study of Austrian business faculties claims that this academic field has been particularly active in the rapid increase in EMI provision in HE, and more than 65% courses taught through English were introduced in the single year 2009-2010.

She found that students' English proficiency was not being evaluated prior to programme entry in nearly a third of programmes surveyed, relying instead on school-leaving certificates. Unlike Italy above, Austrian faculty (at least in this somewhat more restricted area of business studies) reported that some focus was being placed on developing students' language skills in EMI classes. However, there is little provision for teacher preparation to teach through English. In Austria, CLIL is much better established in secondary schools than in either Italy or Poland. Dalton-Puffer (as cited in Yoxsimer Paulsrud, 2014) estimates that approximately 75% of secondary schools have some CLIL provision, almost always in English. One would expect this to be a reasonable foundation for EMI in HE. Nonetheless, Unterberger and Wilhelmer (2011), in their overview of the forms of implementation of EMI in Austria, conclude that there is a "significant risk of rushed decision making" (p. 105) and that the conversion from L1 medium of instruction to EMI needs to be informed by research evidence.

In terms of our third country, the European Commission survey of self-reported competence in a second language placed Poland 18th among EU nations, with 50% of Poles believing that they could hold a conversation in at least one foreign language. However, this figure represents a decrease since the previous survey in 2005. We should note that the recent political history of Poland has impacted on the country's attitudes and policy regarding second language learning, more so than in the other two countries. Thus the drive to offer academic subjects through a second language started in HE in Poland after the systemic changes of 1989. According to Wächter and Maiworm (2014), between 2007 and 2014 the number of ETPs increased five-fold attracting three times more students. In the year 2013-2014, of the 8,300 programmes of study offered by Polish HE institutions 409 were taught in English, which constituted nearly 5% of the total number, attracting 0.7% of the total student body. The authors rank Poland 17th in terms of ETP provision. Poland has 132 public universities and other HE institutions (Piotrowski, 2012). None of these are in the World University Rankings 2014-15 Top 200. There are also over 302 private HE institutions (Ministerstwo Nauki i Szkolnictwa Wyższego, 2013). Individual HE institutions' international strategies preceded the official national internationalisation strategy issued in 2015 by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, which refers to the need to attract more foreign students to Polish institutions of HE. Teachers involved in EMI are not formally required to enhance their language or teaching methodology skills and, like in the other two countries, there is little impetus to create a teacher preparation structure for EMI teachers.

In summary, for these three countries one would expect to see some divergence of university teacher attitudes with respect to and dependent on how well established EMI (or CLIL) is at both the secondary and tertiary level,

whether there are national debates on-going regarding a threat to the national language, and whether there are personal beliefs about levels of teacher English language proficiency as well as that of the students. One might expect convergence on the question of the impact that EMI might have on the internationalisation of their institutions.

2. Methodology

The above general background to EMI and the brief descriptions of EMI in the three countries concerned led us to the following research questions:

1. What are HE teachers' beliefs and attitudes with regard to the introduction of EMI in their universities?
2. How do levels of English proficiency influence teachers' perceived success of EMI programmes?
3. Are there any emerging differences among the "teacher voices" in Austria, Italy and Poland?

Table 1 List of participating teachers from the three countries and their EMI subject

Teacher	Country	Subject
1	Austria	Creative media technologies
2	Austria	Physical therapy, basic physiology, anatomy, orthopaedics
3	Austria	Maths
4	Austria	Computer science, business informatics
5	Austria	English and administrator
6	Austria	Social work, internationalisation, family dynamics, mental health care
7	Italy	English, academic writing
8	Italy	Maths, applied maths
9	Italy	Internet security, IT
10	Italy	Micro-biogenetics, molecular biology and genetics
11	Italy	Italian law, constitutional law
12	Italy	Maths
13	Italy	Industrial engineering
14	Italy	International law
15	Poland	Chemistry, general chemistry, chemistry for biologists
16	Poland	Chemistry technology, physical chemistry
17	Poland	Marine geology, catastrophe geology
18	Poland	English + responsible for Bologna process and language provision
19	Poland	Astronomy
20	Poland	Chemistry
21	Austria	Tourism
22	Austria	Media , broadcasting, radio
23	Austria	Computer science
24	Austria	Social work
25	Austria	Physiology

This was a small-scale qualitative study of university teachers, in one institution in each of the three countries. Individual semi-structured interviews were carried out with 25 teachers (see the appendix for the interview schedule). Table 1 provides information about the teachers whilst ensuring that their anonymity (as well as that of their institutions) is maintained. In order to further protect anonymity with such a small qualitative sample we have not, except in very rare cases, identified the teachers' fields of specialization (academic disciplines).

Ours was an opportunity sample because the teachers had embarked on a week-long programme which explored general issues relating to EMI. Both authors of this paper contributed to that programme, and we clearly acknowledge that this workshop contribution might be seen as a limitation of the research and the findings below may not be typical of teachers in those countries.

In accordance with our own university's ethics protocol, the teachers interviewed were informed as to what the research entailed and how it might be used, the security measures undertaken regarding the storage of data, maintenance of anonymity of participants and institutions. They were also given participant consent forms with the option of withdrawing from the research at any time. The workshop did not carry with it any form of certification; thus, there was no apparent need to "please the interviewer." Interviews were conducted in English in quiet locations. We were given no impression that conducting the interviews in the participants' L2 caused them problems. They also gave the impression of being very relaxed and able to speak freely perhaps because they had got to know the interviewer over the course of the week. Interviews lasted approximately 20 minutes and were audio-recorded. The recordings were transcribed. Analysis of the transcriptions was carried out by first examining the responses to the introductory questions and then identifying themes emerging from the respondents' answers, whether these diverged or not, using the approach advocated by Strauss and Corbin (1998). 10% of the transcriptions were checked for reliability of coding by the other researcher and any disagreements about what themes were emerging were resolved through discussion. The findings are structured according to the research questions, and then within these according to the themes that emerged from the respondents. We first present the findings in general, then provide a comparative account among the three countries.

3. Findings

3.1. What are HE teachers' beliefs and attitudes with regard to the introduction of EMI in their universities?

As can be seen from the interview schedule (see the appendix), we approached the topic of their beliefs and attitudes by asking, at the beginning of the interview,

a broad open-ended first question, deliberately not specifying whether those beliefs and attitudes reflected those of the institution as a whole or were those of the teachers themselves. We expected the term *EMI* itself to be a challenge as no universally accepted definition exists and the teachers were purposively not given a working definition of EMI. However, in general, they understood EMI as describing the practice of teaching their academic subject through English when English was not the teacher's first language or that of either the students in their lecture room or the majority of the population in their country. There were virtually no references to integrating content and language as in CLIL (see Section 1).

3.1.1. Internationalisation

Internationalisation and *globalisation* emerged repeatedly as two "buzz words," and it was clear, as one teacher said, that "*globalisation has arrived*" and both were inextricably linked, in teachers' minds, with EMI: "*Internationalisation is one of the big words here. English as world language, as the key to success, omnipresent.*" Internationalisation was closely linked with teachers' aspirations for their home students, wanting them to be able to function in a globalised world. It became clear that the terms *internationalisation* and *globalisation* were used almost interchangeably. Teachers believed that EMI was "*a passport to a global world,*" a "*key to success,*" giving opportunities to their home students to work and study abroad. By increasing the level of their students' English, teachers were providing their students with opportunities to broaden their horizons. EMI was a way "*to open doors and opportunities.*" Teachers believed that EMI could be "*useful for young people who might have to look for a job abroad*" and that their students had to be flexible in work life and education, be able to move abroad for work and not find it "*a big problem to move to another country or do studies in another country because they already know how it is to have English language.*" Teachers wanted to give their home students a more international outlook by teaching through English, often relating this to their personal experiences of having studied abroad. Those who taught through EMI tended to be those who had studied abroad themselves and who wished to impart some of the excitement and benefits. As one interviewee said:

Due to my own experience and how much more I can do using English, looking at the research going on, and having the opportunity to use all this information is really helpful. [I want to] give the same opportunity to my students as I had.

There was a common belief in the three countries that teaching through EMI at university would improve the students' English. Most interviewees were

convinced that students would improve their English simply by being exposed to it as *"they will be exposed to more input, relevant input"* and *"because they are forced to communicate with me in English and forced to think in English."* One teacher thought that students would *"improve because they have to express themselves and collect the vocabulary to express and for their writing,"* whilst another thought that EMI would be good *"probably not [for] the level of spoken English but to give them more confidence, understand more when reading."*

3.1.2. English as the language of the academy

Another reason for teachers to teach through EMI was that English was the international language of their subject and very often that of the text books, articles, and teaching materials they were using. Thus some found it simpler to teach through English; for example, a science teacher told us: *"The text books are in English and also I give them my experience from scientific papers but they are in English so it's easier to talk in English than in Polish."* Perhaps unsurprisingly, as academics, they held the desire for students to be able to understand research publications, academic literature, to be able to hold their own at international conferences and publish in world-class research journals. One university had research projects with American and other international universities, and all were optimistic that EMI would enable them to produce high quality research papers in English with international impact, helping the university to move up in the international rankings and therefore gain prestige.

3.1.3. International students

In addition to opening up opportunities for home students, across the three countries, EMI was also considered a way of attracting international students. However, these attempts were not always successful, and this was considered to be due to insufficient EMI available at their institutions: *"So far we have not been very successful in attracting other students to come here and one main reason is that we do not offer enough EMI."* Some teachers accepted the need to attract international students somewhat reluctantly but acknowledged: *"For my university it is necessary to open the doors, globalisation has arrived."* There was an acceptance that the emphasis for international students had shifted from studying abroad to learn a language to studying to learn content. This shift was not considered problematic even though students were deciding to study in Austria, for example, without speaking any German: *"When I went to France I had to certificate somehow my knowledge of French – they wouldn't have accepted me coming without French but it's possible now coming and studying without the*

language of the country. It's possible now." There were varying attitudes to the quality and motivation of international students. Some students worked hard: *"From Kazakhstan last year we had 2 persons, they were really very good students . . . also well-prepared from the Chemistry point of view."* Others chose a country because they wanted to travel, for example, some Spanish students who *"came for a holiday"* did not attend lectures but *"travelled a lot so finally they didn't pass exams."* In some cases the international students were not being integrated into regular undergraduate or graduate programmes and were not taught by the same teachers. A few teachers reported that *"they end up being taught individually as the main course is taught in L1"* or in *"a special course for foreigners."* There was concern that international students were being taught by less experienced tutors: *"The course was supposed to be held by a full professor of the university who did not feel confident, then they came to me and asked me because they knew I was from a similar field and solved the problem."*

3.1.4. A generation gap?

Hesitation to embrace EMI perhaps signalled a generation gap. Younger teachers who had studied abroad were keen to try out teaching in English and were optimistic: *"I think [EMI] is a good opportunity for a professor."* Younger teachers were eager to experiment in their own lecture rooms, and enthusiastic about attracting *"intelligent people to my university and share our own knowledge more widely."* One younger teacher nevertheless offered: *"I wanted to prove myself but it's been quite tiring."* Younger teachers wanted to move beyond the narrow national confines. However, one more experienced teacher also said: *[Despite my age,] I want to have a wider audience in my lectures, some Erasmus students; I want to switch in English."* Understandably, some older teachers felt less confident about teaching through a second language. They had nevertheless been put under pressure to teach through EMI, to the point where one experienced professor spoke of bringing in an outside researcher to do his teaching as the researcher was younger and spoke English. In another case the interviewee told us that two PhD students from India had taken his seminars: *"We give them the literature and the papers and they teach the students."* Older teachers were also keener to protect their home language. Although English was seen as the academic lingua franca and, more than once, teachers referred to EMI as the new Latin, EMI was nevertheless viewed with more scepticism by older teachers.

3.1.5. Teachers and university managers

The teachers also made a distinction between their own attitudes to EMI and those of policy-makers and university management. The teachers' reasons for

teaching through EMI were more idealistic than those which they attributed to the administrators of their own universities. As we have seen, teachers expressed a desire to give their students opportunities and give them the keys to success whereas they spoke of the *"central universities," "administration" or "rectors"* introducing EMI for financial reasons, in order to survive and compete with other universities on an international stage. University managers wanted to *"do it in English because of economical reasons and to enlarge our students base."* This was because *"universities [have been] made financially independent and need higher number of students to survive."* Both of them were Italian teachers, and it is interesting that both mentioned finance as a motive for the introduction of EMI in their institution.

3.1.6. EMI policy and resources

If policy makers and university managers insist on introducing EMI for reasons of economic growth, prestige and internationalisation, do they give sufficient consideration to the administrative and teaching resources needed to support its effective implementation? When asked if their university had an EMI policy, the majority of the teachers interviewed suspected that there was a strategy in their university but it was not explicit: *"You mean that we need a . . . ? . . . we have a masters starting in Fall . . . Here isn't a document at least that I know."* One interviewee knew that in their university *"there is a strategy paper, internationalisation is a big goal and EMI is part of that,"* and others thought that a policy might come later: *"Not policy now, it could be in the future,"* or that EMI in their institution was *"a general trend not set in stone."* Some associated EMI with the Erasmus scheme in their institution, seeing it as a kind of continuation: *"each year the numbers of the lectures which are offered in English increase."* According to interviewees, EMI seemed to be growing organically rather than in a planned way; this was reflected not only in the lack of a clear policy in universities, but also in the lack of administrative support, the random choice of subjects taught through EMI, and the criteria used for choosing teachers to teach content subjects in English. Some teachers felt they were carrying all the responsibility for the implementation of EMI. One declared: *"My institution is discharging the responsibilities on the professors and I'm not sure they are doing their best at hierarchical level to support us."* Another teacher was hopeful that *"the offices will get an awareness that it needs to be managed, not just [rely on] the goodwill of lecturers."*

In all three universities there was no clear policy on which subjects should be taught through EMI. Teachers tended to volunteer to teach through EMI when they felt capable of doing so. The point was made that even within subjects such as law, parts of a subject may be suitable for teaching through English

but others would not be. Case law, for example, could be taught in English but it would not make sense to teach constitutional law through the medium of English. Medicine was another example where a teacher explained that studying medicine through EMI made sense in terms of a medical student reading international research but made no sense at all when the student became a practitioner and met their local patients.

3.1.7. Teacher preparation for EMI

Although the teachers we interviewed were taking part in a short EMI teacher professional development course, some teachers, nevertheless, thought their universities were not supporting them sufficiently in EMI pedagogy. However, this may not be simply an EMI problem, but a more general one in European HE. As one teacher told us, *“for professors it's necessary to have good publications. The didactics is not so important at our university.”*

Across the three institutions, teachers reported limited self-experience or no previous understanding of the implications of teaching through EMI. Few teachers said they had considered the idea that EMI was not simply a matter of translating course material and presentation slides from L1 to L2 and/or that it might require a more interactive pedagogy to ensure comprehension. Referring to a Master's degree course, one teacher explained that

half my lectures are in Polish but then I give the summary in English and this is on slides. I ask someone to read this and I give some questions in English and they should answer [in English] but they can choose to answer in Polish or in English.

3.2. How do levels of English proficiency influence teachers' perceived success of EMI programmes?

If universities decide to teach through EMI then a basic first requirement would presumably be that their faculty members speak English—but what level of English? Teachers were asked what level of English they believed was necessary for a teacher to have to teach through EMI and how the teacher could reach that level. They were also asked what level the students needed to have before coming to study with them and how students could reach that level.

3.2.1. Teachers' level of English

All our respondents found it difficult to answer the question about the level of English a teacher should have before teaching through EMI and how teachers

should reach an appropriate level of English. They expressed consternation: *"Phew, wow, I'm not sure what level the teacher needs, erm, it's not necessary that the teacher needs a higher level than the students, but it should be on a good level"; "Pof . . . good question. I don't know actually . . . at least you have to be able to understand the questions of the students. You should be able to talk, formulate and reformulate – that's probably the hardest thing."*

Currently there does not seem to be a standardised English proficiency benchmark test for subject teachers teaching through EMI. The teachers we interviewed were unaware of a language level, test or qualification for EMI teachers in their respective countries. This meant that there was no standard way of deciding who might be competent to teach through the medium of English. Teachers had been nominated to teach through EMI because they had been abroad, were thought to speak English well or, typically, had volunteered. One teacher thought a test would deter teachers, so in their faculty they had *"intentionally left out a standard as requirement as it's difficult enough to encourage faculty to take part and to teach in English."* However, it was also clear that many of the teachers would welcome a benchmark level of English proficiency for EMI to reassure themselves that they were capable of teaching through English. Indeed many of the respondents that we, as researchers, considered confident and proficient English speakers were unsure whether they had a sufficient level of English to teach through EMI. Having a PhD from an English-speaking country was considered one way of measuring a teacher's English skills. However, teaching through EMI would appear to necessitate both English and pedagogical skills, so a PhD was not always enough. One of the interviewees commented: *"Other days it [the lecture] doesn't work and I don't know why . . . if they are astonished or if they are involved or if they are bored."* Another teacher with a PhD expressed their limitations in the following way:

the things I'm teaching I learned them in English during my PhD. When I first came back I had to translate the words into Italian so I feel more confident to teach them the subject. But it might be limiting when I have to make the examples, you feel a limitation, you would like to make things clear and then your dictionary is limited.

Some teachers were aware that they needed a sufficiently high level of English to deal with teaching complex constructs: *"Because I have to explain notions and I know these notions in my language but my task is to use another language and things can change."* At the same time there was a belief that teaching science and maths was easy and required little language: *"I think for technical disciplines we don't need very deep knowledge of the language. The vocabulary is 400 or 500 words."* A maths teacher told us: *"In Maths you are saved by the formulae, and the formulae are true or false in any language,"* and a science

teacher offered: *"In Science it's probably easier because the number of words you have to use in English is lower."* Most importantly, teachers rarely referred directly to the language challenges faced by their students perhaps because they were concentrating on their own challenge of preparing and giving their lectures in English.

3.2.2. Students' level of English

Our interviewees appeared to have only a vague idea of what level of English their students needed in order to follow a course in EMI at university, and expressing this varied from *"quite good"* to referring to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)—generally, but not always—B2. One maths teacher commented: *"I think they have to be able to listen, to follow me to understand my words and my thoughts. They don't have to be very good in written English for following my course."* When asked how the students could reach the necessary level of English to study in their classes, a few teachers were themselves willing to give support: *"Intermediate just to communicate, they don't need to use special terms, I can teach them."* Other teachers thought that it was secondary schools' responsibility to prepare students: *"9 years English at school and if you have good teachers it should be sufficient."* Or the university might help by *"giving them grammar classes in the first semester to prepare them for the official course in the second semester."* In general though, the idea was prevalent that it was the student's own responsibility to make sure that their English was of a high enough standard to study through EMI. One teacher believed that *"the university can support. I know there are English courses for the students but I think it's up to them."* This is an interesting belief especially when combined with most interviewees' attitude that they were not there to support the students in improving their English. Subject teachers did not see themselves as language teachers: *"Errr I don't think so, I'm not going to improve [their] English. I'm going to transfer basic knowledge, try to communicate in a correct way but I'm not going to correct or teach them English!"*

It is not clear if or to what extent a content teacher needs to take some responsibility for the students' language development, and this makes setting and marking exams a challenge. Should the teacher be assessing the English or the content? One teacher told us: *"I do mark the big mistakes but this is not my duty. I shouldn't be judging them on their English."* Another question that needs to be addressed is: What language should the exams be in to enable students to demonstrate their knowledge and their potential? Many teachers were struggling with this dilemma and one explained:

So I even called the rector of the didactic section to ask him if I could eventually use Italian to assess their preparation, because I'm not interested in their English, I'm interested in their comprehension of micro-biogenetics but they said no, no, no it's forbidden!. They didn't even understand the point. But for me it's a serious point.

Clearly many teachers felt teaching English was not their job. Teachers seemed to be oblivious to the effect that a student's poor level of English and little support in improving that level might have on motivation in an EMI context. They complained that the students' poor levels of English inhibited their learning, made them embarrassed, and worse, not able to understand the teaching. One teacher said s/he tried to encourage them:

They [the students] are always complaining that they don't understand, they can't talk, they can't read but it's practice . . . I kept saying don't worry, nobody's laughing at you, ask your question in English. Very few dared to - and the others were laughing.

However, we found virtually no evidence of teachers feeling any sense of responsibility for improving their students' English. When asked whether or not EMI affected the subject content, teachers spoke of the difficulty of expressing themselves clearly in a second language. One teacher spoke for many: *"I'm afraid so . . . I'm not able to tell them every single detail as I run out of words; it takes us longer to teach to understand."* In one case not helping students improve their English was even thought to be an advantage, a good way of getting rid of students in a university which, forced to accept a huge number of students in the first year (so many that they did not even fit into the lecture rooms), used this as a way to reject students after the first year exams: *"Partly professors say we should not support every student only the intelligent students. The intelligent will pass the exams and the others can go."*

3.3. Are there any emerging differences among the "teacher voices" in Austria, Italy and Poland?

Although as researchers we did not specifically go looking for differences between the three countries and by and large there was a great deal of convergence of beliefs, some differences did arise. These emerged from what the teachers chose to focus on (the topics they steered towards) in the interviews rather than in direct answers to our questions. Put differently, it was not the case that teachers from one country did not share the concerns of others; rather, it was what, through their "voices," they seemed to be prioritising as the key issues. For example, in response to the general question about why EMI might be introduced, Austrian teachers steered their answers much more towards their

own and their students' mobility across countries. Italians steered the conversation much more towards the needs of their own institution to internationalise and towards the (very often repeated) problem of Italian being a relatively minor world language. Polish teachers chose to focus quite substantially on the kinds of international students they were getting. The following give a flavour of these subtle, but we believe telling, differences:

I [feel positive about EMI] due to my own experience and how much more I can do using English. (Austria)

[Students need to] feel more comfortable with English in their studies, [so that it's] not a big problem to move to another country or do studies in another country. (Austria)

In the beginning it was for Erasmus students, the students which came to Warsaw from Spain, Portugal, Turkey, recently also Kazakhstan, United States but most of them are from Turkey. I think our country is interesting for them. (Poland)

From Kazakhstan last year we had 2 persons, they were really very good students . . .

We called them guest students and they paid so they were well motivated. (Poland)

I suppose that we are using EMI for internationalisation problems because we have a language which is not spoken around the world. (Italy)

We're linguistically speaking an isolated country. (Italy)

This difference in prioritising certain aspects of the EMI discussion partly reflected the difference in English language provision prior to coming to the university and the overall national competence in English cited in our introduction to the three countries. When asked about how well secondary schools prepared students for EMI in HE, again some subtle differences emerged:

Officially when they graduate from high school they should be at B2, a lot of them aren't . . . a lot of them are at B1.² (Austria).

They probably should attend special courses which can make their English level at the right level. (Poland)

They could do better but the way for teaching English or any foreign language is very old fashioned in Italy. Rarely you have native lecturers and they don't use videos or tape recorders, they hear about grammar but then when you go to Great Britain grammar doesn't help very much. (Italy)

A recurring theme among the Italian teachers was that national pride was at stake: *"When they go abroad to conferences . . . I see some Italians that make me embarrassed so I would not like this to happen in the future any more."* This theme did not arise in either the Austrian or Polish respondents.

On the topic of whether their institutions had a clear EMI policy and support systems, again respondents seemed to steer towards differences which underpinned

² B1 and B2 are levels on the Common European Framework of Reference.

their main attitudes, despite the clear evidence that none had stated an EMI policy and/or strategy documents. Teachers in two of the three universities felt that the infrastructure of their universities was not yet sufficiently supportive of EMI. In Austria, the university had an efficient, English-speaking administrative team in place, but this did not seem to be the case in either Poland or Italy. However, despite the better preparation in Austria from an administrative perspective, it was not necessarily the top administrators who were driving the change. In the following, we should note who the “agents of change” might be:

I and my colleague are the driving force here in the university, trying to implement, trying to convince the rector, the principal to offer more courses in English, we have to pull the wagon. (Austria)

No they ask the director of each department to indicate the professor who could provide courses in English. They ask only the English speaking professor to join the programme but they don't really structure the course before, so as soon as they found the people willing to do EMI, they start. (Italy)

Yes step by step we try to introduce courses for people from Saudi Arabia. (Poland)

If the above reflect the broader picture in the three countries, then it would suggest that in Austria the EMI drivers are the teachers themselves, whereas in Italy and to a lesser extent in Poland, internationalization is being imposed more from above. There was also some indication that of the three institutions at least one was recognising the additional workload posed by EMI as in Poland an EMI lecture was counted as one and a half times the teaching stint of a lecture in L1, recognising the fact that it takes time to prepare a lecture in L2. We were not made aware of any recognition of additional workload that EMI brings about in either Italian or Austrian institutions, nor of any financial enticements to take on the additional burdens of EMI. We asked the teachers where they thought EMI would have got to in 10 years' time in their country. Here there was variation within country as well as among countries:

In Italy? I doubt it will be much more diffused [meaning 'widespread']. There are still so many of my peers who do not speak English. They will never allow it to spread much more than this. (Italy)

I think there will be more, the university will adopt clear cut policies about this. It won't be just grass-root experiences or anybody decides what to do, the way they want to do it. It will be somehow managed in a more conscious and organised way. (Italy)

It will be popular, at this moment this is new. Poland is a country which came into the European Union 20 years ago, so it is not a long time, so we try to improve in different areas. (Poland)

I think this programme is good for us for English but also for teaching this is the time to stop and think. I just talked about seminars, last year was the first year we were obliged to have seminars in English for the masters students. (Poland)

I think almost every university, I hope so. (Austria)

I assume that in 10 years perhaps 50% of the faculties will also have English programmes. It will always be the case that in some disciplines people will say English is not necessary. (Austria)

We propose to finish the findings section with this very thought-provoking statement which will act as an interesting research issue in the years to come: *"I assume [EMI] will keep on making good progress for a while and it'll come to a point where its limits become more apparent and . . . it will be clear it has reached its limits in becoming a productive tool"* (Austria).

4. Discussion

This small scale study sought to investigate university teachers' attitudes to EMI in an institution of HE in each of three European countries. Our findings by and large concur with previous literature on the implementation of EMI in Europe and indeed across the world in that the purposes for its introduction are multifarious (Lehikoinen, 2004; O'Dowd, 2015), the purposes are rarely clearly articulated by policy makers and university managers, and that differences exist both within country and across countries in how it is being introduced and accepted. If this within-country and cross-country diversity is replicated world-wide, then there is an urgent need for research to establish whether this diversity is a positive reflection of different cultural needs, or whether it is simply an overall lack of understanding of EMI's implications and of poor investment in programme preparation.

Clearly, according to the interviewees in the three countries investigated, EMI is on the increase and this concurs with global research previously cited (Brenn-White & Faethe, 2013; Wächter & Maiworm, 2014). The major driver in the implementation of EMI is the internationalisation of the HE sector aimed at attracting more foreign students. This finding supports findings from previous studies (e.g., Başibek et al., 2014 in Turkey; Choi, 2013 in Korea) which have investigated reasons for its growth. *Internationalisation* and *globalisation* were believed to be beneficial for both students and universities. However, it became clear that much more work needs to be done on differentiating these terms. For some universities, *international* may contain a notion of students studying an international, outward-looking curriculum. For others it means setting up partnerships, sending students abroad and attracting students from overseas, but there is no unifying definition of what "going international" actually means.

What was interesting about the data from these three countries was the virtual absence of a concern to keep up with the private sector (e.g., Chapple, 2015; Dearden, 2015; Hamid et al., 2013). Of course a factor at play here is that the private sector does not have a strong foothold in Italy, but we were surprised

at the lack of mention of the private factor in our Austrian and Polish respondents' comments (there are more private universities there although the respondents' institutions were both public ones). It could be argued that state universities are now more financially independent in all three countries and that, in Europe at least, this makes the private versus state distinction less important. However, we would propose that compared to the freedom that the private sector has to offer as many of its programmes through English as it wants and, therefore, generate much greater income through international students, state universities are still relatively restricted. Future research may give greater clarity to some of these issues.

We were also surprised that the issue of university rankings (Hultgren, 2014; Unterberger, 2014) did not emerge more powerfully in relation to EMI and internationalisation in view of the virtual absence of all three countries from the top 200 rankings. In other words, the teachers themselves did not appear to consider rising in the rankings an important issue, even if their managers perhaps did. It was referred to specifically by only one respondent (an Austrian), although there was more indirect reference among others when talking about producing high quality research papers in English. No doubt, the issue was lurking in the background, but rising in the rankings did not seem to have been a strategy explicitly articulated by the university managers. A challenge posed by EMI is the infrastructure of the universities themselves. If our findings are replicated more generally in Europe, then universities need to adapt their organisation and culture if they are to accept and successfully integrate international students. If a university decides to teach through EMI, there will be a need not only for EMI teaching but for English medium administration. International students, once they have applied and been accepted, will need to be enrolled, welcomed and integrated into courses of study; administrative staff will need to be able to speak and write in English. If a university has visiting academics, then administrative systems such as employment and student reports may need to be in English.

As a whole our respondents were more in favour than against the introduction and increase in EMI. This is in line with previous findings of teacher beliefs (e.g., Jensen & Thøgersen, 2011) where there is a recognition of the importance of internationalisation through the implementation of EMI despite its challenges, and our findings also correspond to Dearden's (2015) global survey which showed few educationalists to be fundamentally against its introduction (not including commentators such as Phillipson, 2009 and Kirkpatrick, 2011). There were concerns and challenges to be faced but, in general, there was recognition of benefits both for home students and for the academy more generally. Probably the best way to sum up our respondents' attitudes is that EMI is here to stay and set to increase, and therefore they have to make the best of it.

Perhaps the greatest concern with the dangers of EMI was implicit in the Italians' commentaries, no doubt echoing the national debate in the media that had been taking place. It is interesting that Italians should on the one hand feel their language threatened by EMI and, at the same time, frequently acknowledge the low levels of national English competence. Italian is spoken by approximately 60 million people as native speakers, Polish by 40 million, and German by 90 million. Compared to native speakers of much larger "world languages" (Mandarin, Spanish, English), these figures are relatively similar. Future research may try to dig deeper into why the Italians should particularly feel threatened by the introduction of EMI; none of the Polish or Austrian respondents referred to a possible domain loss of their languages. Nevertheless, the issue of domain loss would appear to be an important one. If a language is no longer used in academia, will it risk being relegated to the status of a spoken language used only as a social vernacular rather than existing in all fields (Dearden, 2015)? A question then arises as to whether English really is a tool for a multicultural and multilingual education. Does an international student gain a merely superficial insight into the host culture if they are not expected to have some competence in the host language? Could EMI simply encourage "educational tourism" (Carr, 2003)? It became evident from the teachers' comments that in many cases the students were not always completely integrated. In the rush to internationalise there seems to be variability in the quality of experience for an international student. It would be worth investigating if, more generally, they are in fact receiving the same content as home students. One of the challenges expressed in our study was the English proficiency levels required of both students and teachers in order not just to survive EMI but to actually thrive on it. Echoing the previous literature (Doiz et al., 2013a; Lam & Wächter, 2014), our respondents reported no clear threshold for either student or their own English proficiency. The issue did not appear to have been sufficiently debated in their respective institutions and future research is urgently needed to establish these thresholds. In terms of whose responsibility it was to develop the English competence of students in EMI classes, the majority did not feel it was the EMI teacher's. This again raises the issue (e.g., by Airey, 2012) of whether secondary schools and preparatory programmes should be responsible for the language levels of the students, whether EMI teachers should be language teachers as well as content teachers, and therefore whether they should be specifically trained as such? Furthermore, given some of the respondents' comments about science and mathematics requiring relatively small vocabularies, there is not only an urgent need for research into subject-specific language requirements but clearly a need for teacher professional development given that research in these subjects (Othman & Saat, 2009; Probyn, 2006), albeit in different contexts, has already

begun to show that complex language and indeed carefully scaffolded interactive learning plays a critical role in understanding content thoroughly. Unlike the views expressed by at least one science teacher, science requires a great deal of language in order to put across concept definition and explanation (Rollnick, 2000; Yassin, Tek, Alimon, Baharom, & Ying, 2010), and it has its own specific genre which is second nature to the teacher but which has to be learnt by the student in order for them to become part of this community of practice (Wingate, 2015).

We detected a distinct lack of awareness of a need to change pedagogy in order to help students (whether home or international) cope with content delivered through a second language. In this connection, we have to keep in mind that these were EMI teachers embarking on a short professional development course, so they were possibly relatively open to the need for a revised pedagogy. There was little mention of the skills they believed might be required of an EFL teacher and how these skills might need to be adopted or developed by them as EMI teachers. At the very least, we would argue, EMI teachers need to know how to modify their input, assure comprehension via student-initiated interactional modifications and create an atmosphere where students operating in an L2 or L3 are not afraid to speak, whilst taking into account the many cultural differences present in the room and the potentially different language levels of individuals. A monologic approach sits uneasily alongside the belief that EMI is a tool for opening doors to a global world, a multilingual and multicultural tool for developing intercultural communication.

5. Conclusion

This was a small scale study of only three institutions in three countries; clearly, this limitation does not allow us to generalise our findings to other contexts, let alone to Europe. Moreover, we acknowledge that the fact that the interviewees had volunteered to be on a teacher development programme which the researchers contributed to may be seen as a limitation. However, from the frankness of their responses we are confident that they were not modifying their beliefs in order to please the interviewer. We found recurring themes, common to all three countries, which have been the concern of previous empirical studies and commentaries, and our data has added to the layers of evidence of what the critical issues are in the implementation of EMI. There is considerable variance in the beliefs and attitudes of EMI teachers with regard to EMI being introduced in their countries. The within-country variation goes from almost unqualified enthusiasm to considerable concern about the speed, lack of agency, low linguistic proficiency and general support for EMI programmes. This variation may be partly explained by the age and/or English proficiency level of the teachers.

Some between-country differences have been highlighted and these appear to relate to the concerns that teachers have about the status of the home language once EMI becomes the norm, as current trends indicate that it will. More research, and particularly quantitative research of comparative nature, is clearly needed in order to gain greater insights into how the educational and political setting influences teacher beliefs. In terms of whose responsibility it was to develop the English competence of students in EMI classes, the vast majority of teachers did not feel it was that of the EMI teacher. Clearly, in the context of HE, EMI is quite some way from the principles of integrating content and language learning (CLIL). However, we should not be surprised that this is the case in HE where teachers have spent years developing as subject specialists. A shift towards greater integration of language into the content of their classes is unlikely to occur without support and structure from their institutions, and the evidence from our study was that the support was lacking in all three.

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APPENDIX

Schedule of interviews with university teachers in Poland, Austria and Italy

Interviews lasted between 15-20 minutes. Questions were asked in the following order, but the interview was allowed to “flow” according to the teacher’s responses.

1. What is your name?
2. What do you teach?
3. Do you already teach in English?
4. Why do we have EMI in the first place? What are you trying to achieve by teaching in English?
5. Is teaching through English language the policy in your university/ the place where you work?
6. Do you think it’s going to be beneficial to the students?
7. Do you think they will improve their English?
8. Do you think the other academic subject content will be affected?
9. What level of English does the teacher need to teach in EMI?
10. How do you think a teacher gets to the level of being good enough to teach in EMI?
11. What level of English do you/ the students need before they come to study with you/ study in EMI at university?
12. and how do the students get to the level of English before they come to your university/ get to university?
13. Do you assess your students in English? Please can you explain? Which subjects? How? Who assesses?
14. and if you think ahead, to 10 years time, where do you think EMI will be?
15. and what do you think the research questions are in EMI? What would you like answers to?